



# Friends of the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
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## Since You Last Read... An Update on the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

The spring of 2015 has been good to the whooping cranes of Louisiana. All cranes continue to do well with approximately one-half (20 individuals) of our birds currently in or around the refuge area of the White Lake complex.

This spring we have been monitoring four pairs of birds for signs of breeding. Three of the pairs are made up of four year-old birds (L1 & 6-11, L7 & 8-11, and L10 & 11-11) and the fourth pair is made up of three year-olds (L1 & 7-12). We have observed L1 & 6-11 and L1 & 7-12 copulate which is a good sign and we hope it will lead to nesting and fertile eggs. Additionally, we are also monitoring a trio of four year-olds (L2, 3, & 13-11) as we expect a pair to emerge out of that group, as well as several other new associations between males and females that may result in additional pairs. We are excited to report L7 & 8-11 (the nesting pair from 2014) returned to the same farm as last year in Avoyelles Parish, built a nest, and produced a clutch of two eggs. The nest was monitored on a regular basis in order to record behavioral



Female L7-11 Incubating Two Eggs Which Were Laid In March 2015



L7 & 8-11 Are Restricted From Access To The Nest While The Two Eggs Are Collected

patterns exhibited by the couple. The pair incubated the nest full term, however, after the required incubation period of 30 days neither egg had hatched.

As in 2014, both eggs were collected from the nest in order to relieve the adults from their parental responsibility to non-viable eggs. In addition, data was collected regarding the nest and surrounding area. Data collected included measurement of the nests' dimensions, water depth, and percent and type of vegetation surrounding the nest.

The eggs were then examined in order to determine whether either egg had been fertile.

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The 2015 Nest of L7 & 8-11 Whooping Cranes

Upon examination, it was determined the eggs were infertile.

Despite what we all may have hoped for with this year's nesting attempt, we must remind ourselves of "standard" crane reproduction; that it is not abnormal for a younger inexperienced pair to have several years of nesting attempts before they are successful.

With that knowledge in mind, these two birds are demonstrating their continued persistence to produce Louisiana's first chick in over 75 years. They also say that "third times the charm", so we will anxiously await and see what next year may bring for this pair of cranes.

## Louisiana Wildlife Federation Honors Whooping Crane Reintroduction Project Participants

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation honored Chevron as the Business Conservationist of the Year at their March 28 banquet honoring recipients of the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards for 2014.

"Chevron is proud to partner with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and the Department and their work to reintroduce whooping cranes to Louisiana," said Sakari Morrison, Chevron Gulf of Mexico General Manager of Public Affairs. "We recognize the importance of protecting biological diversity through programs like these that protect, sustain a viable habitat, and raise awareness and respect for the endangered species throughout our state and region."



LDWF Secretary Robert Barham, Chevron Gulf of Mexico General Manager of Public Affairs Sakari Morrison, Chevron Gulf of Mexico Asset Development General Manager Marcia Houghton and LWF President Barney Callahan



## Louisiana Wildlife Federation Honors Whooping Crane Reintroduction

In total, \$400,000 in Chevron grant funding from 2012 through 2014 has provided for satellite transmitter equipment and associated communications costs for tracking the movement of the whooping cranes released from LDWF's White Lake Wetland Conservation Area in Vermilion Parish.

Grant funds have additionally been utilized for a public outreach media campaign that includes billboards, and television and radio announcements to alert the public that the birds are now on the Louisiana landscape, they should be observed from a distance, and LDWF should be notified if anyone witnesses cranes being harmed.

Additional whooping crane awareness was provided through Chevron's wildlife awareness promotional program featured at New Orleans Pelicans home games during the 2013-14 season and participation in the George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts 2014 "Student Art Competition" that featured the pelican, the whooping crane and the black bear.

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation coordinated receipt and dispersal of Chevron grant funds for stewardship, public outreach and educational purposes.

Robert Love, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries division administrator, was also recognized by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation with the 2014 Governor's Award for Conservationist of the Year. Love, who manages the Coastal and Nongame Resources Division at LDWF, was recognized for leading the department's biologist team involved with the reintroduction of the whooping crane to Louisiana.



LDWF Secretary Robert Barham, Coastal Nongame and Refuge Administrator Robert Love, and LWF President Barney Callahan

"Every species recovery success LDWF has managed through the years has had a point person setting goals, directing personnel and handling the administrative duties so the biologist team can focus on the critical field work," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham at the ceremony in Baton Rouge. "Bob Love has taken that lead with whooping cranes and provided the vision to start and sustain the project."

## Whooping Crane Education and Outreach

We are always attempting to expand our Louisiana whooping crane outreach program in an effort to spread the word about our returned treasure. Please inform us of any public events you feel may serve as a good avenue to help spread the word. Please email suggestions to [csalyers@wlf.la.gov](mailto:csalyers@wlf.la.gov)

## January-March 2015 Friends of the Cranes

A special thanks to our monetary donors, without whom this project would not be possible. The following individuals have made monetary donations to support the reintroduction of whooping cranes to southwest Louisiana:

Jeffrey Cole, Dr. & Mrs. J. King White, Cathy & Alan Troy, P. L. Heurtin, Linda Butcher, Donna Caire, Aubrey Edwards, Fred & Elizabeth J. Manhart, Josette Lester, Tara Gros, Fred & Babette Werner, Gerald & Darlene Reaves, Gerard & Mathilde Wimberly, Sarah Scheitler, Marianne Thompson, Karl & Gretchen Becnel, Dr. Leann Myers, Donald Crais, Frederick & Paula Fontenot, Stephen & Georgia Lacour, Carol Antosiak, Darwin & Linda Knochenmus, Richard & Barbara Glass, Jeanie Bordelon, Janice Aquillard, David & Madeline Breidenbach, and Warren & Judi Gaharan



Approximately 1/3 of the Louisiana whooping crane project budget is comprised of private donations; all donations are sincerely appreciated. If you or someone you know would like to make a donation in support of the cranes, please contact Kell McInnis at 225-765-5100, [kmcinnis@wlf.la.gov](mailto:kmcinnis@wlf.la.gov), or visit the Foundation's website directly at <http://lawff.org/>. Donations can also be mailed directly to the Foundation at P.O. Box 80378 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378.

## Louisiana Whooping Crane Survival as of April 2015:

A total of 64 birds have been released in Louisiana since the project began in 2010. Out of those 64 birds, a total of 40 individuals are currently alive for a survivorship of 63%. Beginning with the 2011 cohort, birds received for the Louisiana project were younger in age compared to those received in the 2010 cohort. LDWF strongly believes that has helped increase the survival percentage of the individual cohorts. Reported below are the survival rates for the 2011-2014 cohorts:

<u>Cohort Year:</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>4 Year Average:</u>
<b>Current Survival:</b>	<b>10/16= 63%</b>	<b>9/14= 64%</b>	<b>7/10=70%</b>	<b>14/14=100%</b>	<b>40/54= 74%</b>

This newsletter is written by Carrie Salyers, Education Outreach Coordinator for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries